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## McCarthy defends 1/6 audio, House GOP backs 'next speaker'

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy told colleagues Wednesday he never asked then-President Donald Trump to resign over the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol as he defended private conversations around the siege that have spilled into the open and jeopardized his leadership. It was the first time McCarthy, who is in line to become House speaker if Republicans win control in the fall midterm election, addressed his colleagues face-to-face as he works to stem the fallout from his criticisms of Trump and far-right members of their party. He received a standing ovation. One Republican in the room said the meeting was "cathartic" for law-

makers. Another voiced confidence that McCarthy would be the "next speaker." "He's got the support of the conference and then some," Rep. Dan Meuser, R-Pa., said as he left the private session at GOP headquarters across the street from the Capitol. Yet amid the show of support, McCarthy was challenged by two of the party's most hard-right lawmakers — Matt Gaetz of Florida and Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia — who said they felt particularly singled out by the leadership team for their fiery comments around Jan. 6. Trump ally Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., who helped organize challenges to the 2020 election results, also voiced concerns, another Republican said.

Continued on next page



House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., talks to reporters at the Capitol in Washington, April 6, 2022.

Associated Press

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But the detractors appeared to be in a dwindling minority as rank-and-file lawmakers rallied around McCarthy, the man who recruited many of them to Congress and is now raising untold millions to help them win back the House majority.

"You guys obsess over January 6. Nobody cares," Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Wis., told a gaggle of reporters outside House GOP headquarters. "It's history."

A California Republican long eyeing the speaker's gavel, McCarthy is at a critical juncture as he works to ascend to the top leadership position. It will be his second try after a failed 2015 bid — but one now fully dependent on his volatile relationship with Trump, who still holds great influence over the party and can make and break careers.

New audio recordings released in recent days by The New York Times portray McCarthy as fed up with Trump in the aftermath of the Capitol attack, when the defeated president rallied his supporters to head to Congress and object to Democrat Joe Biden's elec-



**House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., speaks to reporters at his weekly news conference, at the Capitol in Washington, March 18, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

tion victory.

In the recordings, McCarthy is heard telling Republicans privately that he was considering asking Trump to resign. In another recording released late Tuesday, McCarthy warns that dangerous public commentary from Gaetz and others is "putting people in jeopardy" of potential violence. McCarthy has denied The New York Times account of events, leading Democrats and others to call him a liar, as audio of the secretly recorded calls was released.

The House committee investigating Jan. 6 is seeking an interview with him.

On Wednesday, McCarthy stood at party headquarters and defended his actions, suggesting he was merely running through possible scenarios as Democrats moved to impeach Trump in the aftermath of the violent siege.

In the GOP meeting, McCarthy clearly stated that he never asked the president to resign, the Republicans said. He has also publicly said he did not do

so. The Times did not report that he asked Trump to resign, only that he told Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., and other members he would.

As president, Trump had affectionately referred to McCarthy as "My Kevin," one of his earliest endorsers, but their relationship has frayed over time. McCarthy momentarily turned on Trump as his supporters stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 to disrupt certification of Biden's 2020 presidential win.

In the days after the riot, it seemed Republicans in Washington might part ways with Trump. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell gave blistering speeches against Trump, and McCarthy's public and private conversations at that time show flashes of anger and the depth of angst over the shocking, devastating riot by Trump supporters.

But once Biden took office McCarthy quickly went to Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Florida to patch things up with the defeated president.

Trump and McCarthy spoke last week, and the former president told the leader he was "not mad" about the disclosures.

To become speaker if Republicans win back the House, McCarthy would need to win at least 218 votes. "President Trump said their relationship has never been stronger. That's good enough for me," said Roger Williams, R-Texas. "We're totally supportive of Kevin McCarthy."

"He's got my support. He's got everybody else's support, too," he said.

Still, Gaetz and other detractors remain a force McCarthy must contend with, much like the lawmakers six years ago who denied him backing to become speaker. He abruptly dropped out of the race.

Gaetz tweeted late Tuesday that the private comments from McCarthy and Rep. Steve Scalise, the No. 2 Republican leader, to Cheney and others are "the behavior of weak men, not leaders." He brushed off interviews Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.

Among past rivals for the speaker's gavel, Scalise of Louisiana is no longer outwardly chasing McCarthy for the job, and has in fact become wrapped in the Jan. 6 fallout.

Scalise also faced questions Wednesday in the private meeting after the Times had reported that he joined McCarthy in raising concerns about Gaetz's public comments at the time, Republicans said.

Scalise said the call had been a private conversation, and no one had been accused of anything.

In a statement, Scalise said "it's pathetic" that this is what the media chooses to cover. He said with inflation, crime and other issues, it's obvious that Democrats and the media "continue to double down on their obsession with January 6th" to distract public attention from "the absolutely dismal state of the country."

Yet other Republicans remained noncommittal about McCarthy. Asked if he still has the votes to be the party leader, Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., said, "Time will tell."

From the Democratic side, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the caucus chairman who is also seen as a potential speaker candidate if Democrats retain control, dismissed the Republican strategy for winning back the House as nothing but lies.

"Every day it's a five-point playbook: Number one, lie. Number two, lie. Number three, lie. Number four, lie. Number five, lie again," he said. □

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# Older people fret less about aging in place: AP-NORC Poll

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The older you are, the less you fret about aging in your own home or community. That's a key insight from a new Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll, which found that U.S. adults ages 65 or older feel much better prepared to "age in place" than those 50-64, who are mostly still in the final stretches of their working years.

The poll also documented greater insecurity around aging in place for older Black and Latino Americans, the likely result of a deep-rooted wealth gap that markedly favors white people.

Aging in one's own home, or with family or a close friend, is a widely held aspiration, with 88% of adults 50 and older saying it's their goal in an earlier AP-NORC poll.

The outlook among those 65 or older is upbeat, with nearly 8 in 10 saying they're extremely or very prepared to stay in their current home as long as possible.

But doubts creep in for those ages 50-64. Among that group, the majority who rate themselves as extremely or very prepared shrinks to about 6 in 10, according to the poll.

This relatively younger group is especially likely to say their financial situation is the main reason they don't feel very prepared to age in place. And they're also more likely to feel anxious about being able to stay in their communities, get care from medical providers and receive backup from family members or close friends, the poll found.

Part of it may be due to fear of the unknown among people who've relied on a paycheck all their lives.

"When you've never done it before, and you are only going to do it once, you're sort of flying by the seat of your pants," said Leigh Gerstenberger, in his late 60s and retired from a career in financial services. "I spent a lot of time talking to people ahead of me in the journey," says the Pittsburgh-



**A man and woman walk under trees down a path at Alta Plaza Park in San Francisco.**

**Associated Press**

area resident.

Also, people approaching their 60s may question if Social Security and Medicare will truly be there for them. Stacy Wiggins, an addiction medicine nurse who lives near Detroit, figures she'll probably work at least another 10 years into her late 60s — and maybe part-time after that. Older friends are already collecting Social Security.

"In my group, you wonder if it's going to be available," Wiggins said of government programs that support older people. "Maybe it's not. You will find people who are less apt to have a traditional pension. Those are things that leave you with a lot of trepidation toward the future."

Some people now in their 50s and early 60s may still be dealing with the overhang of the 2007-09 recession, when unemployment peaked at 10% and foreclosures soared, said Sarah Szanton, dean of the Johns Hopkins University nursing school. For an aging society, the U.S. does relatively little to prepare older adults to navigate the transition to retirement, she observed.

"As Americans, we've always idolized youth and we're notoriously underprepared for thinking about aging," Szanton said. "It often comes as a surprise to people." Her involvement with aging-in-place issues

started early in her career, when she made house calls

to older people.

In the poll, people 50 and older reported that their communities do an uneven job of meeting basic needs. While access to health care, healthy food and high-speed internet were generally rated highly, only 36% said their community does a good job providing affordable housing. Just 44% were satisfied with access to transportation and to services that support older people in their homes.

Kym Harrelson-Pattishall is hoping that as more people retire to her coastal North Carolina community, health care facilities and other services will follow. As it stands now, a major medical issue can involve a car trip of up to an hour to the hospital. □

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# Disney government in dark about effect of law dissolving it

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER** and **ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE**  
**Associated Press**

**LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (AP)**

— At the first meeting of Walt Disney World's private government since Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law a measure to dissolve it next year, officials said Wednesday they were still confused about what the new legislation meant, even as some ripple effects were starting to be felt.

The administrator of the government, called the Reedy Creek Improvement District, said the expansion of a solar power project could be delayed because of financing challenges linked to the legislation, and the union for the district's firefighters expressed concerns about what the dissolution might mean for members' lifetime benefits. After the meeting, Donald Greer, who has been a member of Reedy Creek's board of supervisors since 1975, said the board could not provide clear answers on those issues because "we don't know where we are going."

"The district may have a response as soon as we know what it means, but I don't know if anybody knows what it means. I don't think anyone has deciphered it," Greer said.

The dissolution measure was passed quickly in the Republican-controlled statehouse without public study of its impact and was hastily signed into law by DeSantis. The move came in a GOP push to punish Disney over its opposition to another new law barring instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation in



**District Administrator John Classe, from left, Ed Milgrim, legal counsel, Leila Jammal, Board of Supervisors, Jane Adams, BOS, Larry Hames, President of the BOS and Don Greer, BOS, meet with the days agenda in the Reedy Creek District of Orange County, Fla., Wednesday, April 27, 2022.**  
**Associated Press**

early grade school, which critics call "Don't Say Gay." For the governor, the feud was the latest front in a culture war he has waged over policies involving race, gender and the coronavirus, battles DeSantis has harnessed to make himself one of the most popular Republicans in the country and a likely 2024 presidential candidate.

A day before DeSantis signed the bill into law, the Reedy Creek Improvement District sent a statement to investors that said it would continue its financial operations as usual. The district wrote that its agreement with the state forbids Florida from limiting or altering the district's ability to collect taxes or fulfill its bond obligations.

Critics of the dissolution bill have warned that taxpayers in neighboring counties could end up shouldering about \$1 billion in debts

from the district. DeSantis has dismissed those concerns and said additional legislation would be drafted to clarify the future of such special districts in the state.

At the Reedy Creek meeting Wednesday, district administrator John Classe said a developer has experienced challenges financing a planned expansion of a solar power program, meaning it could be delayed.

Jon Shirey, the head of the union for Reedy Creek's firefighters, who make up around half of the private government's 400 employees, asked supervisors to give his members reassurances that their jobs and benefits would be preserved since they have been kept in the dark about what the effect is going to be. The firefighters, particularly retirees, are worried about losing their

guaranteed lifetime health insurance, he said.

"We have been told to stay quiet, don't talk to the media, don't engage with current events," Shirey told supervisors. "We have been told the leadership of the district will tell the story. They will be the ones putting out the message. I ask you, 'What is that message?'"

The supervisors did not respond, and in fact spent little time devoted to the legislation which poses an existential threat to the 55-year-old Reedy Creek Improvement District. Classe told supervisors its workers would continue to function with the same "high standards and professionalism they always have done as we learn what this legally means."

Backers of the dissolution of Reedy Creek have argued it removes an unfair advantage the entertainment gi-

ant has over other theme parks, including allowing it to issue bonds and set its own zoning standards.

At an event Monday, the governor assured a cheering crowd that Disney's bond debts won't be dumped on taxpayers.

"Under no circumstances will Disney be able to not pay its debts, we will make sure of that," DeSantis said. Credit rating agency Fitch Ratings has put Reedy Creek on a "negative watch" list, indicating that the private government's ratings could stay the same or potentially be downgraded. A downgrade would make borrowing more difficult for Reedy Creek.

Another ratings agency, S&P Global Ratings, said that among the questions left unanswered by the new law was whether Reedy Creek would reconstitute after it's dissolved next year, how utility operations and debt would be transferred to the neighboring governments if it came to that and how the neighboring governments would raise taxes to secure Reedy Creek's debt.

Under the law, Reedy Creek would expire by June 2023. The lack of public answers from Reedy Creek leaders about the new law may come from fear "the governor will find their statements unfriendly and that will complicate things," said Shirey, who added he is optimistic lawmakers will look after the interests of the district's first responders.

"We have 14 months, and a lot can change between now and then," Shirey said. □



**Detainees talk on telephones at the Adelanto ICE Processing Center in Adelanto, Calif., Aug. 28, 2019.**

**Associated Press**

## New hearing ordered over California ban on private prisons

**SAN FRANCISCO, Calif.**

**(AP)** — A federal appeals court on Tuesday agreed to reconsider a ruling that rejected the state's first-in-the-nation ban on for-profit private prisons and immigration detention facilities. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered a new

hearing before an 11-judge panel, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

Last October, a three-judge appellate panel kept in place a key piece of the world's largest detention system for immigrants — despite a 2019 state law aimed at phas-

ing out privately-run immigration jails in California by 2028. The law was passed as one of numerous efforts by California Democrats to limit the state's cooperation with the federal government on immigration enforcement under the Trump administration. □



# EU nations accuse Russia of using natural gas as 'blackmail'

By VANESSA GERA and  
VESELIN TOSHKOV

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) —

Polish and Bulgarian leaders accused Moscow of using natural gas to blackmail their countries after Russia's state-controlled energy company stopped supplying them with gas Wednesday. European Union leaders echoed those comments and were holding an emergency meeting on the Russian move.

The gas cutoff to Poland and Bulgaria came after Russian President Vladimir Putin said that "unfriendly" countries would need to start paying for gas in rubles, Russia's currency, which Bulgaria and Poland refused to do.

Russian energy giant Gazprom said in a statement that it hadn't received any payments from Poland and Bulgaria since April 1 and was suspending their deliveries starting Wednesday. And if those countries siphon off Russian gas intended for other European customers, Gazprom said deliveries to Europe will be reduced by that amount. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the announcement by Gazprom "is yet another attempt by Russia to use gas as an instrument of blackmail."

Europe is not without some leverage in the dispute, since it pays Russia \$400 million a day for gas, mon-



Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki speaks to media at the gas station of Gaz-System in Rembelszczyzna, near Warsaw, Poland, Wednesday, April 27, 2022.

Associated Press

ey Putin would lose with a complete cutoff.

Russia, however, rejected the idea that it was using blackmail while warning it may halt gas supplies to other European customers if they also refuse to switch to paying in rubles.

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, argued that the Russian demand to switch to paying for gas in rubles resulted from Western actions that froze Russian hard currency assets. He said those were effectively "stolen" by the West in an "unprecedented unfriendly action."

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki told Poland's parliament that he thinks the suspension was

revenge for new sanctions against Russia that Warsaw imposed over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Morawiecki called it an "attack on Poland" and an example of "gas imperialism" while vowing that Poland would not be cowed by the cutoff. He said the country was safe from an energy crisis thanks to years of efforts to secure gas from other countries.

"We will not succumb to Russia's gas blackmail," he told lawmakers, to applause. He also sought to assure citizens that the gas cutoff would not affect Polish households.

Some Poles and Bulgarians welcomed the cutoff for moving them closer to independence from Russian

energy.

"I don't know what the results will be for regular citizens like myself," said Nina Rudnicka, a lecturer at Poznan University. "But I believe that one should not bow to Russia's blackmail. It was the right decision not to change to payment in rubles."

Dobrin Todorov, a resident of Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, said given a "choice between freedom and dignity or gas, the answer is clear, in favor of freedom and dignity."

"So we will go through this ordeal. It cannot be compared to the hardship and tribulations that the Ukrainian people are currently suffering," Todorov added.

The new Polish sanctions against Russia, announced Tuesday, targeted 50 Russian oligarchs and companies, including Gazprom. Hours later, Poland said it had received notice that Gazprom was cutting off its gas supplies for failing to pay in Russian rubles. Poland's gas company, PGNiG, said the gas supplies from the Yamal pipeline stopped early Wednesday. Russian gas supplies to both Poland and Bulgaria already were expected to end later this year anyway. Poland relies on coal for 70% of its energy needs, with gas only making up around 7% of its energy mix. Several years ago, the country opened its first terminal for liquefied natural gas, or LNG, in Swinoujscie, on the Baltic Sea coast. A pipeline from Norway is to due to start operating this year.

Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov, whose government has been cutting many of the country's old ties with Russia, called Gazprom's suspension of gas deliveries "a gross violation of their contract" and "blackmail." He vowed to defend the country's interests and "support military-technical assistance to Ukraine."

"Unfortunately, in the recent past we were treated as Russia's fifth column. And there are many political and economic circles that protect Russia's interests," he said. □

# Central African Republic president authorizes cryptocurrency

By JEAN FERNAND KOENA  
BANGUI, Central African Republic (AP) —

Central African Republic has legally recognized the use of cryptocurrency after the president approved a law adopted by deputies last week that has also made bitcoin an official currency alongside the West African CFA franc in the African nation.

President Faustin Archange Touadera validated the law Wednesday, saying that the exchange rate between cryptocurrencies and the FCFA is freely de-

termined by the market. Tax contributions can also be paid in cryptocurrencies through platforms recognized by the government, the government statement said.

It said the country is now the "first country in Africa to adopt bitcoin as a reference currency."

Central African Republic is among the world's poorest countries, according to the United Nations, and has been in a state insecurity and increasing violence for nine years. The government controls the capital, but

much of the country is controlled by armed groups.

Many officials and civil society groups including Citizens Standing in Solidarity with Central African Republic have protested this law, saying it risks national sovereignty.

"By imposing cryptocurrencies as national currency, the power of Bangui has just sold off the little that still remained of the authority of the State and its power to control its economy, and therefore its development," the group said in a statement. □



An advertisement of Bitcoin, one of the cryptocurrencies, is displayed on a building in Hong Kong, on Nov. 18, 2021.

Associated Press



# Ushering in Holocaust day, Israeli PM warns of polarization

By LAURIE KELLMAN

Associated Press Writer

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett delivered a stark message Wednesday as the country ushered in its annual Holocaust memorial day, warning Jews against letting internal divisions tear society apart.

Speaking at Yad Vashem, Israel's memorial to the 6 million Jews slaughtered by the Nazis and their collaborators, Bennett also called on the world to stop comparing the Holocaust to other events in history. He spoke after leaders in both Ukraine and Russia drew parallels between their ongoing war and the genocide during World War II.

"As the years go by, there is more and more discourse in the world that compares other difficult events to the Holocaust. But no," he said. "No event in history, cruel as it may have been, is comparable to the extermination of Europe's Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators."

Bennett's speech, coming on one of Israel's most solemn days of the year, came in a deeply personal context as well. On Tuesday, his family received a letter with a live bullet and a death threat. Israeli authorities tightened security



Israeli soldiers attend the opening ceremony of the Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day at Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, Wednesday, April 27, 2022.

Associated Press

around the premier and his family and were investigating.

"My brothers and sisters, we cannot, we simply cannot allow the same dangerous gene of factionalism dismantle Israel from within," Bennett said.

Bennett did not explicitly refer to politics. But he leads a narrow coalition that recently lost its parliamentary majority. His government is made up of eight parties that have little in common beyond their shared animosity to former Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Netanyahu, now the opposition leader, has worked hard to deepen divisions within the coalition. Bennett's government was formed after four inconclusive elections, underscoring the fissures in society over key issues, including the conflict with the Palestinians and relations between religious and secular Jews. Israel, founded in 1948 in the wake of the Nazi genocide, makes great effort to memorialize the victims of the Holocaust and make

heroes of those who survived. Today, the country is home to a large but rapidly dwindling community of fewer than 165,000 aging survivors.

For them, challenges loom. This year's ceremony comes as Israel and much of the world emerges from the coronavirus pandemic, which confronted Holocaust survivors in particular with increased health risks as well as widespread loneliness and despair.

Additionally, about a third of Israel's Holocaust survi-

vors live below the poverty line, with many sustained by government stipends and donations, according to a group that represents survivors.

Despite their experience and widespread education programs, antisemitism rose worldwide during the pandemic, according to a report released Wednesday.

It pinned the fuel for the anti-Jewish surge on lockdowns, social media and a backlash against Israel's punishing air raids on the Gaza Strip during last year's 11-day war.

In addition to speeches by Bennett, Israeli President Isaac Herzog and others, Wednesday's ceremony featured survivors lighting six torches — for the 6 million murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. The speaker of Germany's parliament, Bärbel Bas, also attended as a special guest. During the annual memorial, places of entertainment and restaurants close and TV stations either go dark or dedicate programming almost exclusively to Holocaust documentaries, interviews with survivors and melancholy music.

On Thursday morning, Israel will come to a standstill as sirens wail for two minutes.

□

## DJI halts Russia, Ukraine business to prevent drone misuse



A Phantom 4, developed by major Chinese consumer-drone maker DJI, flies during its demonstration flight in Tokyo, Thursday, March 3, 2016.

Associated Press

**BEIJING (AP)** — Drone company DJI Technology Co has temporarily suspended business activities in Russia and Ukraine to prevent use

of its drones in combat, in a rare case of a Chinese company pulling out of Russia because of the war. "DJI is internally reassessing

compliance requirements in various jurisdictions. Pending the current review, DJI will temporarily suspend all business activities in Russia and Ukraine," the company said in a statement released Tuesday.

Many Western brands and companies have withdrawn from the Russian market due to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, but Chinese firms have kept operating there. Beijing has refrained from publicly criticizing Russia over the war. Both Ukraine and Russia are thought to be using DJI drones in combat, even though the company maintains that its products are intended for civilian use.

Vice Prime Minister of

Ukraine Mykhailo Federov wrote an open letter last month appealing to DJI to block sales of its drones in Russia, contending that Russian troops were using "DJI products in Ukraine in order to navigate their missiles to kill civilians."

The AeroScope system installed in DJI drones allows the detection and monitoring of other drones and their operators in the vicinity via special receivers. The worry is that Russians might be using the AeroScope system to attack Ukraine drone pilots.

DJI has rejected claims that it leaked data on Ukraine's military positions to Russia, after German retailer Mediamarkt cited Russia's use

of DJI drones in the war as a reason it removed the company's products from its shelves. Last week, DJI said in a statement that its drones are not marketed or sold for military use. It said it "unequivocally opposed attempts to attach weapons" to its products.

"We will never accept any use of our products to cause harm, and we will continue striving to improve the world with our work," the company said.

Another Chinese business, ride hailing company Didi Global, reversed a decision to withdraw from Russia after it was blasted by members of the Chinese public for bowing to pressure from the West. □





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## Myanmar court sentences Suu Kyi to 5 years for corruption

By GRANT PECK

**BANGKOK (AP)** — A court in military-ruled Myanmar convicted former leader Aung San Suu Kyi of corruption and sentenced her to five years in prison Wednesday in the first of several corruption cases against her.

Suu Kyi, 76, who was ousted by an army takeover last year, has denied the allegation that she accepted gold and hundreds of thousands of dollars in a bribe from a top political colleague.

Her supporters and independent legal experts consider Suu Kyi's prosecution an unjust attempt to discredit her and legitimize the military's seizure of power while preventing her from returning to an active role in politics.

The daughter of Aung San, Myanmar's founding father, Suu Kyi became a public figure in 1988 during a failed uprising against a previous military government when she helped found the National League for Democracy party. She spent 15 of the next 21 years under house arrest for leading a nonviolent struggle for democracy that earned her the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize. When the army allowed an election in 2015, her party won a landslide victory and she became the de facto head of state. Her party won a greater majority in the 2020 polls.

Suu Kyi is widely revered at home for her role in the country's pro-democracy movement — and was long viewed abroad as an icon of that struggle, epitomized by her years under house arrest.

But she also has been heavily criticized for showing deference to the military while ignoring and, at times, even defending



Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi participates in the ASEAN-Japan summit in Nonthaburi, Thailand on Nov. 4, 2019.

Associated Press

rights violations — most notably a 2017 crackdown on Rohingya Muslims that rights groups have labeled genocide. While she has disputed allegations that army personnel killed Rohingya civilians, torched houses and raped women and she remains immensely popular at home, that stance has tarnished her reputation abroad.

She has already been sentenced to six years' imprisonment in other cases and faces 10 more corruption charges. The maximum punishment under the Anti-Corruption Act is 15 years in prison and a fine for each charge. Convictions in the other cases could bring sentences of more than 100 years in prison in total. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reiterated his appeal Tuesday for Myanmar's military to release all political prisoners including Suu Kyi and his condemnation of the military takeover of the country on Feb. 1, 2021, U.N. deputy spokes-

man Farhan Haq said.

The U.N. chief also repeated his call for an immediate end to violence and repression in Myanmar and for respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "which enshrines the principles of equality before the law, the presumption of innocence, the right to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, and all the guarantees necessary for a person's defense," Haq said.

"These are trumped-up charges, politically motivated, to keep her inside prison for such a long time and also are designed to keep her away from the political limelight," said Wai Hnin Pwint Thon, a Geneva-based activist with the pro-democracy group Burma Campaign UK. "And I'm sure the military is also thinking, by sentencing her, they are grabbing the hope away from people but, in reality, it's doing completely the opposite because people

haven't lost hope. They are still standing up against the military."

Suu Kyi's trial in the capital, Naypyitaw, was closed to the media, diplomats and spectators, and her lawyers were barred from speaking to the media. The evening newscast on state television confirmed the sentence.

Following the victory of Suu Kyi's party in the 2020 general election, lawmakers were not allowed to take their seats when the army seized power on Feb. 1, 2021, arresting Suu Kyi and many senior colleagues in her party and government. The army said it acted because there had been massive electoral fraud, but independent election observers didn't find any major irregularities.

The takeover was met with large nonviolent protests nationwide which security forces quashed with lethal force, killing almost 1,800 civilians, according to a watchdog group, the Assis-

tance Association for Political Prisoners.

As repression escalated, armed resistance against the military government grew, and some U.N. experts now characterize the country as being in a state of civil war.

Suu Kyi has not been seen or allowed to speak in public since she was detained and is being held in an undisclosed location. However, at last week's final hearing in the case, she appeared to be in good health and asked her supporters to "stay united," said a legal official familiar with the proceedings who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to release information. In earlier cases, Suu Kyi was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on charges of illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, violating coronavirus restrictions and sedition.

In the case decided Wednesday, she was accused of receiving \$600,000 and seven gold bars in 2017-18 from Phyo Min Thein, the former chief minister of Yangon, the country's biggest city, and a senior member of her political party. Her lawyers, before they were served with gag orders late last year, said she rejected all his testimony against her as "absurd." The nine other cases currently being tried under the Anti-Corruption Act include several related to the purchase and rental of a helicopter by one of her former Cabinet ministers.

Suu Kyi is also charged with diverting money meant as charitable donations to build a residence, and with misusing her position to obtain rental properties at lower-than-market prices for a foundation named after her mother. □



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## New beginnings after the kitchen table and beyond with new restaurant: Infini by Chef Urvin Croes

**PALM BEACH** — After spearheading The Kitchen Table for five years, receiving notable recognitions in USA Today, The Daily Meal and earning the #1 spot on Tripadvisor's list of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Caribbean, Chef Urvin Croes has now moved on to higher heights. Infini, his new chef's table, which opened at the Blue Residences in November 2020, allows the Michelin-trained Aruban culinary artist to create gastronomic experiences unconfined by cultural or regional expectations. The former The Kitchen Table space has since been renovated into a suitable culinary studio to host this vision. In describing these changes, Croes says: "We opened up the entire kitchen and elevated the dining tables so guests have a front row stadium-like view of each step of the preparations. The spotlights, which we carefully choreograph, follow the plates' transition from blank canvas into culinary works of art."

**"It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create."**

He had been sitting on the first menu for over a year. Inspired by umami, one of the five basic tastes, and also Japanese for "essence of deliciousness", Chef Croes strived to organically produce this palate in each dish of the eight-course Chef's Impression. "It is a flavor that you



cannot define, but you can create. Take our popular langoustine for example; we combined elements that are rarely paired together: the bitter, sour and salty flavors of the lemon cream, kombucha, green grapes, watercress and achiote, fused with the sweet and delicate taste of the langoustine induce ultimate umami."

After hosting the first menu for three months, the Executive Chef introduced a second tour de force in February 2021 — this time a pescatarian menu dedicated to Lent, of which Croes has to say: "I wanted to focus on the finest fish in the world, they are the protagonists of this season." Visitors can experience the second Chef's Impression until May 2021, at which point Croes and his team will reveal exciting new flavors for the summer.

**"Without a great team, there is no great chef"**

"There is very little I can do by myself. Without a great team, there is no great chef", says Croes, while raving about the six young professionals sharing his kitchen. All graduates of Aruba's EPI College and familiar faces to the Chef as each one has completed their culinary internship under his guidance. In fact, Infini's Chef de Cuisine, Ashwin Maduro, was Urvin's very first student, before relocating to Amsterdam, where he worked at several Michelin-starred restaurants, including &moshik (formally &Samhoud Places). Having recently returned to Aruba, Chef Maduro is thrilled to be reunited with his first mentor and hopes to secure Aruba's space on the global map of unique culinary experiences. Similarly, after four years working in the two-Michelin starred restaurant Spectrum, Chef de Partie Moises Ramirez returned home to share his vast experience in formulating recipes with meticulous attention to detail and consistency. Further down the kitchen line, Chef de Partie Alvaro Yi, who has worked at the two-Michelin starred FG Restaurant, is all about expressing himself through cooking and plating



to create art that you can eat. Mixologist Marc-Anthony Rannis brings eight years of experience in the fine dining industry to Infini. His fine craftsmanship is displayed in the unparalleled wine pairings and signature cocktails, which include his personally homemade syrups, garnishes and fresh local ingredients. Maître D' and Junior Sommelier Jessica Theysen, who previously managed renowned Chef Dennis Huwae's Restaurant Daalder in Amsterdam, is a true storyteller. From the moment she serves the Salinity welcome drink and the culinary tale begins, she takes you on an adventure around the world to discover never-before-tasted combinations. Then, towards the end of the night, it is his time to shine — Pastry Chef Jean-Claude Werleman, that is. After spending the last two years perfecting his recipes in the Pastry Department of the Ritz Carlton Aruba, Werleman joins Infini to continue exploring his passion for experimenting with colors and bold flavors.

**"It's time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own"**

"The goal is to leave our visitors speechless. The look on their faces whenever they take the first bite says it all and it is priceless", shares Croes, with a smile. Reclaiming the spot of number one restaurant in the Caribbean is also in sight, but this time he will not stop there. "In the end, we want Aruba to be recognized for its culinary mastery. We have trained the best culinary artists right here on the island and they have proven themselves internationally in the most renowned kitchens in the world. Now it is time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own. Who knows where that will take us; hopefully to infinity and beyond."

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Infini located at Blue Residences currently serves an eight-course Chef's Impression to up to 21 guests starting at 6:30PM.

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## Teleshop Palm Beach; a new and modern design SETAR is proud to announce the reopening of Teleshop Palm Beach with a completely new building and modern design

The Teleshop Palm Beach has been remodeled in the new SETAR style with a design that reflects the nature of our island and the symbol of SETAR as the national company of telecommunications.

Clients who visit the Teleshop can make use of the "Self-Service Kiosk" to pay their bills of recharge their prepaid accounts in a fast way, or take a seat to be attended by one of our representatives.

Teleshop will provide cli-

ents with a new and modern experience. There will be an area of "touch and feel", where clients will be able to experience and see the latest models in mobile phones and accessories that are for sale. There will also be an area where clients can comfortably watch tv while they wait to be tended to and a sofa equipped with outlets to recharge devices, and a helpdesk to assist customers.

On top of that, next to the newly built building, the old

Teleshop building will become a Café where clients can sit and eat or drink. All this and more will be in an innovative way that will be unique on Aruba.

After a period of construction work, Teleshop Palm Beach is ready to serve its clients. Teleshop Palm Beach opened its doors to the public on the 26th of April in 2022. At the same time, SETAR informs that Teleshop Seroe Blanco has been closed definitively to the public starting on the 25th of April 2022. Clients can visit any of our Teleshops around the island for all services.

SETAR invites all of Aruba, especially the community in Noord, to come admire and enjoy the new Teleshop that is open from Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5:30pm. □



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Article by Etnia Nativa

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## The Aruban genome

Episode CLI - 151

**All children of the same mother have identical mitochondrial DNA. The sons of this woman's daughters also have the same mtDNA, and so on. mtDNA is inherited only from mother to child.**

In the picture we can observe an Aruban family from 1950 of over seven generations. Eight individuals (mother and children) that carry a Native American Mt DNA and a European nuclear DNA. Where some of them look more white, other are mixed and yet some show mongoloid features of their native ancestors.

The mtDNA test not only reveals the origin of your maternal ancestors, but also those that you are related to on the maternal side. The results of your mtDNA test may be used for maternal kinship searches around the world or for regional investigations. This research is about knowing if people with the same or similar place of origin are biologically related.

At present, these kinship searches are available to everyone through the Internet. We can start a project on maternal kinship or also subscribe to an existing one. It is free and very suitable if you want to find relatives on the mother's side her mother and so one in history. A mitochondrial DNA test shows you your haplogroup (your tribe in prehistory) and which ancient people (Celts, Vikings, Jews, Native American etc.) your ancestors belonged to. In addition, you will also learn which region your profile is typical of and where your ancestors lived during the Middle Ages (500 AD to 1500 AD). Depending on the genetic profile, a definitive assignment is not possible. With a nuclear DNA genealogy you will also find "genetic relatives", that is, people with whom you share ancestors on your fathers side.



By exchanging information with your "genetic relatives" about, for example, the family tree, you can broaden your knowledge about the history of your paternal ancestors.

However keeping our attention on the Mt-DNA results specifically of your own origin, you can also investigate the gene pool of a certain region. So you can find out which families come from the same region, how closely intertwined and related they are, and which haplogroups and consequently, what Haplo types are still present under our native population. These results should not always or only be compared with entries in a family tree, but also possibly with historical sources. For example; Was this region a Caquetio settlement? Find out

what traces these peoples have left in their genes which are still present in the current population. Perhaps this home settlement represents an important part of our forgotten story.

If you love Aruba its origins and its cultural heritage, be part of the exclusive visitors of Etnia Nativa: a cozy museum/home.

Etnia Nativa a private residential houses collections of native art, archaeological artifacts and historic furniture, while the facilities themselves are the result of the transformation of recycled materials. Meet Anthony Croes, our columnist at his home! Book your visit Whatsapp + 297 592 2702- or mail: etnianativa03@gmail.com

## JUMP18 - Aruba Childhood Obesity Prevention Program" with great results

**ORANJESTAD – On April 22, 2022, the Minister of Tourism & Public Health the closing ceremony of the first Aruba Childhood Obesity Prevention Program called "JUMP18" at the Gloria took place.**



JUMP18 is a multidisciplinary childhood obesity prevention program affiliated with the Horacio Oduber Hospital.

JUMP18 started on September 14, 2021, to make a difference, and inspire and motivate others. It will create new opportunities for all involved in the program, for example, the parents, the professionals, and especially the children.

JUMP18 is a team of five young Aruban healthcare professionals and a pediatrician that developed a hands-on initiative to empower children and their parents to improve their health and well-being. The philosophy of JUMP18 is to motivate and enable Aruban children and their parents to live sustainable and healthy lifestyles needed to prevent the harmful effects of childhood obesity. JUMP18 aims to help parents and children

to live healthier lives by (re)educating and challenging their limiting beliefs. Over the past six months, JUMP18 held a variety of workshops under professional guidance for the children and their parents. Minister of Tourism & Public Health, Mr. Dangui Oduber, who attended the closing ceremony, affirmed that this program is according his Healthcare policy based on prevention. "It is for the first time in history Aruba has a national plan for the prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases, approved by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The national prevention plan is an extensive long-term plan to reduce the amount of NCDs under the Aruban population and reach a more sustainable budget for AZV. It is essential to teach children, at a very young age, the importance of leading a healthy life.

NCDs are diseases such as cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and chronic lung diseases and are a burden on the AZV's budget. Diabetes causes kidneys failure and leads to dialysis. Each patient undergoing dialysis has a hefty price tag of Awg.100,000.00 per year for the AZV, and these are almost 100% preventable. Obesity and malnutrition is the leading cause of most of these diseases. Minister Dangui Oduber thanked Dr. Jamiu Busari, he founder and senior researcher of JUMP18, for this initiative and supervision. He also thanked the professional medical team of JUMP18 for making this program a success. To have a healthy community takes responsibility and commitment to take better care of ourselves, eat healthier, and be more active. Together we can succeed.



# Edmunds: A longer loan for your car? Bad idea

By RONALD MONTOYA  
Edmunds

The traditional "20/4/10 rule" of car buying states that you should make a 20% down payment, have a loan no longer than four years, and a total monthly car budget that does not exceed 10% of your take-home pay. But the reality is only 6% of new car shoppers actually followed that advice in March, according to Edmunds sales data. The average loan term for a new or used car has steadily increased over the last decade and is now about 70 months.

The longer loan terms reflect not only a trend of people seeking a way to offset paying for costlier trucks and SUVs but also inflated prices due to a nationwide vehicle shortage. At today's car prices, the old rule of thumb is not only being ignored but is also unattainable for most Americans.

"Shrunk inventory continues to wreak havoc on both the new and used vehicle markets," said Jessica Caldwell, Edmunds' executive director of insights. "Shoppers who can actually get their hands on a vehicle are committing



A sold tag hangs from the inside rear-view mirror of a 2022 4Runner sports-utility vehicle as it sits in an empty storage lot at a Toyota dealership Sunday, Feb. 27, 2022, in Englewood, Colo.

Associated Press

to never-before-seen average payments and loan terms."

In March, 73.4% of financed loans were above 60 months. The most common term was 72 months, followed closely by an 84-month loan. The trend is worse for used car loans. Just over 80% of used car loan terms were over 60 months, with 72 months the most common term.

A longer loan has the car-

rot on the stick of a more palatable monthly payment, but it comes with a number of drawbacks.

## HIGHER INTEREST CHARGES

The longer the term, the more interest you will pay on the loan, both in terms of the rate itself and the finance charges over time. Let's take a look at how the numbers change on two loans that are on opposite ends of the financial spectrum.

The average loan amount for a new car in the first quarter of 2022 was \$39,340. If we went with the recommended 48-month term, it would have an average interest rate of 1.9% in March 2022. The finance charges over the life of the loan would be \$1,545, giving you a staggering monthly payment of \$852. It's easy to see why someone would opt for a longer loan.

Contrast that with an

84-month auto loan. The monthly payment would drop to \$563 with a 5.4% interest rate. It seems like a massive improvement over 48 months — until you see the finance charges: \$7,990 over the life of the loan. That's \$6,445 more over the 48-month loan and yet 34% of new-car buyers are willing, or forced, to make that compromise.

Now let's say you purchased a lightly used car with a 72-month loan term at the average financed price of \$30,830. Your monthly payment would be \$559. It seems somewhat reasonable from a monthly payment perspective. However, interest rates are much higher for used cars, and a rate of 9.2% is fairly common. You'd be paying \$9,403 in finance charges.

## NEGATIVE EQUITY

Many auto loans start in a position of negative equity, meaning you owe more on the loan than the vehicle is worth due to finance charges and the initial depreciation hit of about 20%-25%. The time it takes you to build equity in the car will vary based on the vehicle's resale value, the loan term and down payment. □

# Delta to begin paying flight attendants during boarding

By DAVID KOENIG  
AP Airlines Writer

Delta Air Lines, which is facing another attempt to unionize its flight attendants, will begin paying cabin crews during boarding, a first for a major U.S. airline.

Across the airline industry in the United States, hourly pay for flight attendants starts when all the passengers are seated and the plane's doors close.

Delta said the change will start June 2 on all flights.

In a memo to flight attendants, Delta's senior vice president of in-flight service, Kristen Manion Taylor, said the new pay "further recognizes how important your role is on board to ensuring a welcoming, safe and on-time start to each

flight."

The rate of pay during boarding will be 50% of regular wages.

The change comes as Delta plans to increase the boarding time for single-aisle or "narrow-body" planes from 35 minutes to 40 minutes, which the airline expects will increase the percentage of flights that depart on time.

Manion Taylor said that after a test last fall, and getting comments from flight attendants, she promised not to impose the new boarding times without providing additional pay for the cabin crews.

Delta said the new boarding pay would be on top of 4% raises for flight attendants that it announced in March and which take ef-

fect later this week.

Atlanta-based Delta has successfully campaigned to defeat several attempts to organize its 20,000 flight attendants. The Association of Flight Attendants — which has been gearing up its latest organizing effort at Delta for more than two years but has not yet amassed enough support to force a vote — took credit for the boarding pay. "This new policy is the direct result of our organizing," the union said in a statement posted on its website. "As we get closer to filing for our union vote, management is getting nervous."

The union represents flight attendants at United, Alaska, Spirit and about a dozen smaller airlines. Delta said none of those airlines



A passenger wears a face mask as she waits in a socially-distanced area for a Delta Airlines flight, Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021, at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta.

Associated Press

pay their cabin crews for boarding time.

Unions represent between 82% and 86% of workers at American, United and Southwest, but only 20% of Delta's 83,000 employees,

according to a regulatory filing. Delta's 13,000 pilots are represented by the Air Line Pilots Association. Flight attendants at Delta's Endeavor Air regional-flying subsidiary are unionized. □



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 44 Dull

1 Dairy buy finishes

5 Aesop's works 45 British stable

11 Valhalla VIP

12 Friend of George and Jerry

13 Lady of Spain

14 Firstborn

15 Lift, stateside

17 Salon stuff

18 Sailing boats

22 Analyze grammar

24 Pitch

25 Copying

26 "The Matrix" hero

27 Join the big leagues

30 Vigilant

32 Clear sky

33 Gear part

34 Wire

38 Sweet-talk

41 Miss Marple

42 Dis-inclined

43 Gorillas and gibbons

## DOWN

1 Manner

2 Revered one

3 Simple chart

4 Rascals

5 Yard divisions

6 Brass and bronze

7 Unjust charge

8 Use deceit

9 Print units

10 Ready to go

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Yesterday's answer

16 Pub product 30 Poker card

19 Pinot or Merlot 31 Legislative holdup

20 Lusty look 35 Sediment

21 Place for a coin 36 Over again

22 Book unit 37 Clutter

23 Bunches 38 Motor part

28 Snappy 39 Director

29 Ultimatum 40 Airport sight

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44							45			

4-28

A XYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-28

## CRYPTOQUOTE

QLDPGYL BN NBRLDQ GQ BRL

DLIB XNO MSX JND XNOD

DNNH RLDL NI LSDBR.

— HORSHHSK SWG

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF THE ONLY PRAYER YOU EVER SAY IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE IS THANK YOU, THAT WOULD SUFFICE. — MEISTER ECKHART

# What Musk's past tweets reveal about Twitter's next owner



The Twitter page of Elon Musk is seen on the screen of a computer in Sausalito, Calif., on Monday, April 25, 2022.

Associated Press

By DAVID KLEPPER

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) —

Three days before Elon Musk agreed to buy Twitter, the world's richest man tweeted a photo of Bill Gates and used a crude term to make fun of his belly.

Playful, aggressive and often juvenile, Musk's past tweets show how he has used social media to craft his public image as a brash billionaire unafraid to offend. They may also reveal clues as to how Musk will govern the platform he hopes to own.

"Look at the feed: It's all over the place. It's erratic. At times it's pretty extreme," said Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University professor who studies social media and who recently assigned Musk's tweets as reading material for their students. "It paints him as some sort of rebel leader who will take control of the public square to save it. That is a myth he has constructed."

Musk joined Twitter in 2010 and now has more than 85 million followers — the seventh most of any account and the highest for any business leader. He had mused about buying

the site before he agreed on Monday to pay \$44 billion for Twitter, which he said he hopes to turn into a haven where all speech is allowed.

"I hope that even my worst critics remain on Twitter, because that is what free speech means," Musk wrote in a tweet.

As the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, Musk uses his Twitter account to make business announcements and promote his enterprises. He muses about technology and trade, but has also posted jokes about women's breasts and once compared Canada's prime minister to Hitler. He regularly weighs in on global events, as he did in March 2020 when he tweeted that "The coronavirus pandemic is dumb."

On Tuesday Musk used Twitter to criticize one of the platform's top executives and an attorney, in one case in a reply to a far-right activist who promoted the discredited conspiracy theory that pizza parlors around the U.S. were being used to traffic children.

Musk's tweets were followed by a wave of harassment by other accounts

that targeted both individuals. For Vijaya Gadde, an 11-year Twitter employee who heads up the company's legal, policy and trust divisions, the harassment included racist and misogynistic attacks, in addition to calls for Musk to fire her. Musk has long used the megaphone of his Twitter account to punch back at critics or people he opposes, such as when he attacked a diver working to rescue boys trapped in a cave in Thailand by calling him a "pedo," short for pedophile. The diver had previously mocked Musk's proposal to use a sub to rescue the boys. Musk, who won a defamation suit filed by the diver, later said he never intended "pedo" to be interpreted as "pedophile."

A few years ago, after software engineer Cher Scarlett criticized Musk's handling of the cave incident, the tech billionaire fired back and she was soon being harassed by dozens of Musk's online fans. He later deleted the posts, but not before Scarlett had to lock down her account because she was receiving so many hateful messages.

"It's ironic to me that somebody who claims they want to buy Twitter to protect free speech has such thin skin," she said. "He's a very smart man, and when he replies to people that criticize him, he knows what he's doing. To me that's not championing free speech, it's weaponizing free speech, and I think that's what he'll do owning this platform."

Nineteen-year-old Jack Sweeney got Musk's attention when he created an automated Twitter account that tracked the movements of Musk's jet. Musk responded by offering Sweeney \$5,000 to pull the account. When Sweeney refused, Musk blocked him on Twitter.

Sweeney said he's worried he may get kicked off the site entirely if Musk's takeover is approved. But he said he likes Musk's free speech absolutism, and hopes he sees it through. □

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24/7



# Incandescent light bulbs being phased out to save energy



General Electric light bulbs are displayed in a supermarket April 5, 2021 in New York. Associated Press

**By MATTHEW DALY**  
**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Biden administration is scrapping old-fashioned incandescent light bulbs, speeding an ongoing trend toward more efficient lighting that officials say will save households, schools and businesses billions of dollars a year. Rules finalized by the Energy Department will require manufacturers to sell energy-efficient light bulbs, accelerating a longtime industry practice to use compact fluorescent and LED bulbs that last 25 to 50 times longer than incandescent bulbs. The Trump administration had slowed an earlier phaseout of incandescents, saying it was targeting rules that burden businesses.

Once the new rules are fully in place next year, consumers should save nearly \$3 billion per year on their utility bills, the Energy Department said. The rules are projected to cut planet-warming carbon emissions by 222 million metric tons over the next 30 years, an amount equivalent to emissions generated by 28 million homes in one year, officials said.

"By raising energy efficiency standards for lightbulbs, we're putting \$3 billion back in the pockets of American consumers every year and substantially reducing domestic carbon emissions," Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said in a statement Tuesday. □

# Classifieds

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# Boxer's Holocaust ordeal, aftermath told in 'The Survivor'

By LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — In "The Survivor," filmmaker Barry Levinson reaches back 80 years to tell the grueling story of a boxer who put the lives of fellow concentration camp prisoners at risk to save his own.

The moral and psychological repercussions for Harry Haft are why Levinson, the Oscar-winning director of "Rain Man," was drawn to the project based on a book about Haft's Holocaust ordeal written by his son, Alan Scott Haft.

"This is not about the life of somebody in a camp. It's the fragments of what happened in the camp, and what happened there to survive," Levinson said. "Now he's trying to get on with life and struggling with it."

Haft must face the questions of "how do you have a life, how do you have a full life?" he said.

HBO's "The Survivor," starring Ben Foster, debuts 8 p.m. EDT Wednesday to mark Yom Hashoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day. It honors the 6 million Jews who died as part of Nazi Germany's mass murder of European Jews.

The film, written by Justine



This image released by HBO shows Ben Foster as concentration camp prisoner Harry Haft in a scene from "The Survivor," premiering Wednesday, April 27.

Associated Press

Juel Gillmer ("The 100"), dramatizes Haft's experience in Auschwitz, a central part of the Nazi death camp system. An estimated 1.3 million people were deported to Auschwitz in German-occupied Poland and at least 1.1 million died, according to its museum and memorial website.

A teenager when arrested, Haft is among those kept alive as slave labor, held under horrific conditions and given tasks, includ-

ing the disposal of bodies. Always ready with his fists, Haft is given the chance to take part in boxing matches, becoming an amusement and source of betting income for German officers.

As depicted in the film, the champion goes on to fight again; the loser's fate is likely death. Haft is driven to prevail in the ring by love — he longs to be reunited with Leah, his childhood sweetheart. Convinced

she will somehow survive imprisonment and the war, he let's nothing stand in his way to do the same.

While Haft's Holocaust experience is a brief part of "The Survivor," Levinson said, it permeates it "because in his head he can't let it go." The story follows Haft as he begins life anew in America, pursues a boxing career and starts a family, even as he continues to search for his lost love.

The University of Southern

California's Shoah Foundation was a historical consultant on the production and provided a videotaped interview with Haft, preserved in the foundation's archives. He died in 2007, at age 82.

Vicky Krieps, Peter Sarsgaard, Danny DeVito and John Leguizamo co-star in "The Survivor," which reunites Levinson and Foster, whose first film role was in the director's "Liberty Heights."

The actor, whose other films include "Hell or High Water" to "X-Men: The Last Stand," met the demands of playing Haft from the skin in. He's unrecognizable in the part.

"I just don't think I could live with myself if I had shown up and lost 15 pounds, when you scratch the surface of any kind of research on this (the Holocaust) and look at these human beings who are reduced to bone," he said. As he was learning to box, the actor said, he also wanted to discover how thin he could get and still fight.

"It was a strange, obsessive need to know my own limits, rather than check....a box of, 'Actor lost weight, good,' or 'Actor gained weight, good,'" he said. □

# Helen Mirren graces cover of People's 'Beautiful Issue'



Helen Mirren arrives at the Oscars in Los Angeles on Feb. 24, 2019. Mirren will grace the cover of People magazine's "The Beautiful Issue."

Associated Press

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.  
**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Helen Mirren graces People

magazine's "The Beautiful Issue" in a cover story that touches on her thoughts of

beauty and how the Oscar winner still gets nervous before filming a role.

The magazine on Wednesday revealed the cover of the annual issue, which hits newsstands Friday.

The 76-year-old Mirren said she was "gobstruck" after learning about her honor and never considered herself beautiful — especially at her age. From her perspective, the word beauty should be dubbed another word: swagger.

"I love the word swagger because I think swagger means I'm confident in myself, I'm presenting myself to the world, I'm enjoying the world around me," said Mirren, who won an Academy Award for best actress for her role in the 2006 film "The

Queen." The actor, who has been a L'Oreal Paris spokesperson since 2014, has built an impressive acting career with more than 140 credits in 55 years.

"I think what is called the beauty industry should be called the swagger industry," she continued. "We're giving people swagger." Despite her revered career, she still finds herself nervous before starting a new project.

"I get very nervous about the day-to-day process," said Mirren, who starred in films including "The Long Good Friday," "Elizabeth I" and "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, & Her Lover." "And meeting and dealing with new people. And not knowing whether I am going to

remember my lines or not. I just get very frightened until I get into the swing of things and then I kind of relax."

After a film wraps, Mirren said her nerves are calmed and she doesn't read any reviews — good or bad.

While Mirren is hesitant to call herself beautiful, Vin Diesel believes the word perfectly suits her.

"She has a charisma that is timeless. She has looks to kill and always has. She has a jovial spirit," said Diesel, who starred in the 2021 film "F9" with Mirren. "But I think the thing that is most attractive about Dame Helen Mirren is the way she makes you feel. She always makes you feel appreciated and loved. And for that, I love her forever." □



# Draft cements the marriage of Las Vegas and NFL

By TIM DAHLBERG

**LAS VEGAS (AP)** — The NFL brings the traveling circus that is its draft to a city where nothing — including 300-pound football players posing with showgirls and circus clowns above the Bellagio hotel fountains — is too outlandish.

As the draft begins Thursday, the marriage between the league and the gambling town it demonized for so long is nearly complete, with only a Super Bowl in 2024 remaining to formally complete the partnership. The masses who will gather to see where their team might be heading in the next year will find the usual draft-day theatrics amid the bright lights of the casinos. Commissioner Roger Goodell will be on hand to announce and greet the first-rounders — dressed in their best suits and new team hats — and everyone watching will party like their team has just made the playoffs.

Interestingly enough, in a city built on betting, there will be little of it on the draft itself — and little at all on draft day. And, no, it's not because the NFL objected to the idea of fans screaming in glee because they got good odds on the No. 5 pick.

Blame it on the caution of Nevada gambling authorities, who have never liked



A worker helps erect a red carpet and stage in front of the Bellagio hotel-casino during setup for the NFL football draft, Tuesday, April 26, 2022, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

the idea of allowing betting on anything other than actual sporting contests at the sportsbooks that line the Strip. While other states new to sports betting offer more to bet on, Nevada has allowed bets on the draft only since 2017 — and all bets that include the name of a player must be made at least 24 hours before the draft.

Also, good luck finding a bookie willing to take more than a couple of hundred bucks on an event where inside information could potentially give a bettor a big edge.

"It might be my least favorite event to book," said Jay Kornegay, a longtime oddsmaker who runs the Westgate SuperBook. "We've only done it a few years, but we haven't fared well on it at all."

That's largely, Kornegay said, because the so-called sharps in the past have gotten tips on picks before bookies themselves found out — the one thing every sportsbook operator fears most.

The guess is that, even in Las Vegas, betting on the draft isn't the top priority for most of the tens of

thousands of fans who will gather over three days for the annual spectacle. They're there mostly to see who their team lands that might change its fortunes, and to be part of a scene that is becoming increasingly familiar since the NFL decided to take the draft on the road in 2015.

More than 600,000 showed up in Nashville in 2019 for the biggest draft party ever. Last year, Cleveland hosted a smaller but still respectable crowd of 140,000 over three days.

What happens in Vegas, though, will be tough for

any future site to match. A city long used to hosting big events won't have any trouble making this a glittering spectacle.

The future stars of the NFL will be introduced on a stage adjacent to the Caesars High Roller observation wheel, where each night free concerts will feature acts like Weezer, Ice Cube and Marshmello. The red carpet walk will take place on a stage built over the spectacular fountains of the Bellagio resort, where performers from Cirque du Soleil and Blue Man Group will also do their thing.

There will even be a pop-up sportsbook on site, though fans will have to be content with betting on baseball and the NBA playoffs because they won't be able to bet on the number of quarterbacks taken in the first round.

Indeed, the draft highlights how the NFL and Las Vegas are intertwined so tightly that it's easy to forget the Supreme Court ruling that opened the path to legalized sports betting across the nation came just four years ago.

At that point, the NFL wouldn't even allow players inside casinos for events. Now fans not only can bet on their team but go inside a casino and play a slot machine emblazoned with their team's helmet. □

## Manning funds Ga. Tech scholarship honoring Demaryius Thomas

**ATLANTA (AP)** — Peyton Manning has set up a scholarship at Georgia Tech honoring former teammate Demaryius Thomas.

Thomas died in December from an apparent seizure at his suburban Atlanta home. He was 33.

The PeyBack Foundation, a charitable organization set up by Manning and his wife Ashley, announced Wednesday that it will fund academic scholarships in the receiver's name at his alma mater.

The financial aid will be available to incoming freshmen from Laurens County, the central Georgia community where Thomas was

born and raised, or surrounding areas.

"Demaryius Thomas was an incredibly talented and unselfish teammate, but more importantly, he was a special person and friend," Manning said in a statement. "My family and I miss him dearly, and we wanted to honor D.T.'s memory."

Thomas starred at Georgia Tech from 2006-09 and was a first-round pick of the Broncos. After the team signed Manning at quarterback, Denver reached two Super Bowls and won the championship after the 2015 season.

Thomas was a four-time Pro Bowler who finished his ca-

reer with 724 receptions for 9,763 yards and 63 touchdowns. He also spent time with the Houston Texans, New England Patriots and New York Jets before retiring after the 2019 season.

"An important part of Demaryius' legacy was the way he inspired the next generation to pursue their dreams with the same perseverance and determination that defined him," Manning said. "Through this scholarship to Georgia Tech, Demaryius will have a lasting impact on deserving youth from his hometown area who can follow in his footsteps and accomplish great things in life." □



Former NFL quarterback Peyton Manning, left, chats with Joe Lacob, majority owner of the Golden State Warriors, during a timeout in the second half of Game 3 of an NBA basketball first-round Western Conference playoff series between the Warriors and the Denver Nuggets on Thursday, April 21, 2022, in Denver.

Associated Press



# EXPLAINER: Will a Russian prisoner exchange impact Griner?

By **DOUG FEINBERG**  
**AP Basketball Writer**

Brittney Griner remains detained in Russia and it's unclear how an unexpected prisoner exchange between the United States and Russia that freed marine veteran Trevor Reed on Wednesday will affect the status of the WNBA star. Griner has been detained in Russia since mid-February.

The deal announced by the U.S. and Russia involving Reed, an American imprisoned for nearly three years, would have been a notable diplomatic maneuver even in times of peace. It was all the more surprising because it was done as Russia's war with Ukraine has driven relations with the U.S. to their lowest



Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner pauses on the court during the second half of a WNBA basketball game against the Seattle Storm, Sept. 3, 2019, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

point in decades.

Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist who plays for

the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury, was arrested in Russia for allegedly possessing a

cannabis derivative legal in much of the world. The offense can mean up to 10 years in prison. Experts have predicted the two-time Olympic gold medalist could get much less if convicted.

Like many top WNBA players, Griner plays overseas as a way to supplement her income. She was returning to the country after the Russian League, in which she also plays, was taking a break for the FIBA World Cup qualifying tournament.

## WHAT THE PRISONER EXCHANGE MEANS?

It is unclear if Reed's release will have any bearing on Griner's case. It seems unlikely to have any immediate impact in part because the administration played

down the idea of a broader rapprochement with Moscow at a time when Russia is at war with Ukraine.

## IS GRINER'S CASE SIMILAR?

In addition, Griner's case is at a much different status than that of Reed, who had been convicted in a Russian court and sentenced to nine years in prison. Griner's case, by contrast, has yet to wind through the Russian court system, with the evidence and facts still unclear.

The U.S. had assessed Reed and another American, Michigan corporate security executive Paul Whelan, to have been unjustly detained by Russia and had officials had pressed Moscow for their release. American officials have not yet made a similar determination about Griner, meaning that their role — at least overtly — is generally confined to ensuring she has access to consular services while behind bars.

## WHERE IS GRINER NOW

The 6-foot-9 Griner is being held in a detention facility near Moscow. She has been meeting with her lawyers regularly and had a visit with a U.S. Embassy official last month to check on her condition.

State Department spokesperson Ned Price said last month that Griner appeared "to be in good condition." Price did not identify the official who had been granted consular access to Griner.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Griner had her detention extended to May 19. More information about her case may emerge then. But regardless of the factual allegations against her in court, it's impossible to divorce the legal case from the broader political implications. In some cases, U.S. officials do speak out loudly when they're convinced an American has been wrongly detained. But Griner's case is barely two months old and officials have yet to make that determination. A State Department office that works to free American hostages and unjust detainees is not known to be involved. □

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